

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A sales support server which is capable of communicating with an estimated price database, in which specifications for vehicles and estimated prices  
5 to be automatically transmitted of the vehicles are stored in association with each other for a plurality of kinds of vehicles, a dealer terminal used by a dealer of vehicles, and a client terminal each other via a network, the sales support server comprising:  
10       a reception unit which receives specification information specifying specifications for a vehicle and an estimation request from said client terminal;  
          a reading unit which reads an estimated price to be automatically transmitted from said estimated price  
15       database based upon the specification information;  
          a first transmission unit which sends the estimated price to be automatically transmitted read by said reading unit to said client terminal;  
          a second transmission unit which sends the  
20       specification information received by said reception unit to said dealer terminal in order to inquire an estimated price from said dealer; and  
          a control unit which, when the estimation request  
25       is received by said reception unit, decides whether to send the estimated price to be automatically transmitted stored in said estimated price database to said client terminal or to inquire the estimated price

from said dealer, and controls said first transmission unit or said second transmission unit.

2. The sales support server according to claim 1,  
5 further comprising a confirmation unit which confirms with said terminal apparatus whether or not the estimated price to be automatically transmitted read by said reading unit may be presented to a client,  
wherein, according to a result of confirmation by  
10 said confirmation unit, the estimated price to be automatically transmitted is sent to said client terminal by said first transmission unit.

3. The sales support server according to claim 1,  
15 wherein, in response to an estimation request which is received within a predetermined period from update of the estimated price to be automatically transmitted in said estimated price database, said control unit controls said first transmission unit to  
20 send the estimated price to be automatically transmitted stored in said estimated price database to said client terminal.

4. The sales support server according to claim 1,  
25 wherein said sales support server is capable of communicating with a price information database which stores a market price relating to the vehicle, and

said control unit uses the specification  
information received by said reception unit to read a  
related market price from said price information  
database and read an estimated price to be  
5 automatically transmitted from said estimated price  
database and, in the case in which a difference between  
the read estimated price to be automatically  
transmitted and the market price is within a  
predetermined range, controls said first transmission  
10 unit to send the estimated price to be automatically  
transmitted stored in said estimated price database to  
said client terminal.

5. The sales support server according to claim 1,  
15 wherein said reception unit further receives a  
desired price at which a client desires to purchase a  
vehicle from said client terminal, and

in the case in which the estimated price to be  
automatically transmitted read from said estimated  
20 price database is higher than the desired price  
received by said reception unit, if a difference  
between the estimated price to be automatically  
transmitted and the desired price is within a  
predetermined range, said control unit controls said  
25 first transmission unit to send the read estimated  
price to said client terminal.

6. The sales support server according to claim 1,  
wherein said reception unit further receives a  
desired price at which a client desires to purchase a  
vehicle from said client terminal, and

5 in the case in which the estimated price to be  
automatically transmitted read from said estimated  
price database is higher than the desired price  
received by said reception unit, if a difference  
between the estimated price to be automatically  
10 transmitted and the desired price is within a  
predetermined range, said control unit controls said  
first transmission unit to send the received desired  
price to said client terminal as an estimated price.

15 7. The sales support server according to claim 1,  
wherein said reception unit further receives a  
desired price at which a client desires to purchase a  
vehicle from said client terminal, and

in the case in which the desired price received by  
20 said reception unit is higher than the estimated price  
to be automatically transmitted read from said  
estimated price database, said control unit controls  
said first transmission unit to send the received  
desired price to said client terminal as an estimated  
25 price.

8. The sales support server according to claim 1,

wherein said estimated price database stores the estimated price to be automatically transmitted for each salesclerk of said dealer,

said reception unit further receives salesclerk  
5 information specifying the salesclerk from said client terminal, and

said reading unit reads an estimated price to be automatically transmitted from said estimated price database based upon the salesclerk information and the  
10 specification information.

9. The sales support server according to claim 1,

wherein said estimated price database stores an estimated price to be automatically transmitted for all  
15 specifications of the vehicle, and

said reading unit reads an estimated price to be automatically transmitted for the same specifications as specification included in the specification information received by said reception unit.

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10. The sales support server according to claim 1,

wherein said estimated price database stores an estimated price to be automatically transmitted for specifications of a part of the vehicle, and

25 in the case in which an estimated price to be automatically transmitted of the specification information received by said reception unit is not

stored in said estimated price database, said reading unit reads an estimated price to be automatically transmitted of specifications close to the specification information.

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11. The sales support server according to claim 1, wherein said estimated price database stores an estimated price to be automatically transmitted for specifications of a part of the vehicle,

10 in the case in which an estimated price to be automatically transmitted of the specification information received by said reception unit is not stored in said estimated price database, said reading unit reads an estimated price to be automatically transmitted of specifications close to the specification information, and

15 said control unit corrects the read estimated price to be automatically transmitted and sends the estimated price to be automatically transmitted to said client terminal by said first transmission unit as an estimated price to be automatically transmitted corresponding to the specification information received by said reception unit.

25 12. The sales support server according to claim 1, wherein said sales support server is managed by a manufacturer of the vehicle, and

an estimated price to be automatically transmitted included in said estimated price database cannot be updated freely by the manufacturer but can be updated only by access from said dealer terminal.

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13. The sales support server according to claim 1, wherein said reception unit further receives client information specifying a client from said client terminal,

10        said control unit decides whether to send an estimated price to be automatically transmitted stored in said estimated price database to said client terminal or to inquire an estimated price from said dealer according to the client information received by  
15        said reception unit, and

          in the case in which said control unit decides that said sales support server should inquire an estimated price from said dealer, said second transmission unit sends the client information and the  
20        specification information received by said reception unit to said dealer terminal.

14. The sales support system according to claim 13, wherein said sales support server is capable of  
25        communicating with an automatic reply prohibited client database in which clients to whom an estimated price to

be automatically transmitted should not be  
automatically sent are registered, and

said control unit refers to said automatic reply  
prohibited client database and, if the client  
5 information received by said reception unit is included  
in said automatic reply prohibited client database,  
decides that the sales support server should inquire an  
estimated price from said dealer.

10 15. The sales support server according to claim 13,  
wherein said sales support server is capable of  
communicating with a number of times of estimation  
database in which the number of times estimation is  
requested is stored for each client, and

15 said control unit refers to said number of times  
of estimation database and, in the case in which a  
client, who has made the estimation request received by  
said reception unit, requested estimation a  
predetermined number of times or more in the past,  
20 decides that the sales support server should inquire an  
estimated price from said dealer.

16. The sales support server according to claim 1,  
wherein said reception unit is capable of further  
25 receiving a comment made by the client, and

in the case in which said reception unit receives  
the comment, said control unit decides that the sales



support server should inquire an estimated price from said dealer.

17. The sales support server according to claim 1,  
5 wherein said estimated price database stores specifications of a vehicle for a plurality of types of vehicles, an estimated price to be automatically transmitted in selling the vehicle, and first calculator identification information of a person who  
10 has calculated the estimated price to be automatically transmitted associating them with each other,

said reception unit further receives second calculator identification information of a person who should calculate an estimated price from said client  
15 terminal,

said control unit decides whether or not said first calculator identification information corresponding to the estimated price to be automatically transmitted of the specification  
20 information received by said reception unit and said second calculator identification information received by said reception unit are different, and

in the case in which said control unit decides that the first calculator identification information  
25 and the second calculator identification information are different, said second transmission unit sends the estimated price to be automatically transmitted to said

dealer terminal and requests approval on transmitting the estimated price to be automatically transmitted to said client terminal.

- 5 18. A sales support server which is capable of communicating with an estimated price database, in which specifications for vehicles and estimated prices to be automatically transmitted of the vehicles are stored in association with each other for a plurality
- 10 of kinds of vehicles, a dealer terminal used by a dealer of vehicles, and a client terminal each other via a network, the sales support server comprising:
- reception means which receives specification information specifying specifications for a vehicle and
- 15 an estimation request from said client terminal;
- reading means which reads an estimated price to be automatically transmitted from said estimated price database based upon the specification information;
- first transmission means which sends the estimated
- 20 price to be automatically transmitted read by said reading means to said client terminal;
- second transmission means which sends the specification information received by said reception means to said dealer terminal in order to inquire an
- 25 estimated price from said dealer; and
- control means which, when the estimation request is received by said reception means, decides whether to

send the estimated price to be automatically  
transmitted stored in said estimated price database to  
said client terminal or to inquire the estimated price  
from said dealer, and controls said first transmission  
5 means or said second transmission means.

19. The sales support server according to claim 18,  
wherein said reception means further receives  
client information specifying a client from said client  
10 terminal,

said control means decides whether to send an  
estimated price to be automatically transmitted stored  
in said estimated price database to said client  
terminal or to inquire an estimated price from said  
15 dealer according to the client information received by  
said reception means, and

in the case in which said control means decides  
that said sales support server should inquire an  
estimated price from said dealer, said second  
20 transmission means sends the client information and the  
specification information received by said reception  
means to said dealer terminal.

20. The sales support server according to claim 18,  
25 wherein said reception means is capable of further  
receiving a comment made by the client, and

in the case in which said reception means receives the comment, said control means decides that the sales support server should inquire an estimated price from said dealer.

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21. The sales support server according to claim 18, wherein said estimated price database stores specifications of a vehicle for a plurality of types of vehicles, an estimated price to be automatically transmitted in selling the vehicle, and first calculator identification information of a person who has calculated the estimated price to be automatically transmitted associating them with each other,

10 said reception means further receives second calculator identification information of a person who should calculate an estimated price from said client terminal,

15 said control means decides whether or not said first calculator identification information corresponding to the estimated price to be automatically transmitted of the specification information received by said reception means and said second calculator identification information received by said reception means are different, and

20 in the case in which said control means decides that the first calculator identification information and the second calculator identification information

are different, said second transmission means sends the estimated price to be automatically transmitted to said dealer terminal and requests approval on transmitting the estimated price to be automatically transmitted to  
5 said client terminal.

22. A sales support system, including: a sales support server managed by a manufacturer of vehicles; a dealer terminal used by a dealer of vehicles; a client  
10 terminal; and an estimated price database, in which specifications for vehicles and estimated prices to be automatically transmitted for the vehicles are stored in association with each other for a plurality of kinds of vehicles, the sales support server, the dealer  
15 terminal, the client terminal, and the estimated price database are capable of communicating with each other via a network,

wherein said sales support server comprises:

a reception unit which receives specification  
20 information specifying specifications for a vehicle and an estimation request from said client terminal;

a reading unit which reads an estimated price to be automatically transmitted from said estimated price database based upon the specification information;

25 a first transmission unit which sends the estimated price to be automatically transmitted read by said reading unit to said client terminal;

a second transmission unit which sends the specification information received by said reception unit to said dealer terminal in order to inquire an estimated price from said dealer; and

5 a control unit which, when the estimation request is received by said reception unit, decides whether to send the estimated price to be automatically transmitted stored in said estimated price database to said client terminal or to inquire the estimated price  
10 from said dealer, and controls said first transmission unit or said second transmission unit.

23. The sales support system according to claim 22,  
wherein said reception unit further receives  
15 client information specifying a client from said client terminal,

said control unit decides whether to send an estimated price to be automatically transmitted stored in said estimated price database to said client  
20 terminal or to inquire an estimated price from said dealer according to the client information received by said reception unit, and

in the case in which said control unit decides that said sales support server should inquire an  
25 estimated price from said dealer, said second transmission unit sends the client information and the

specification information received by said reception unit to said dealer terminal.

24. The sales support system according to claim 22,  
5 the sales support server according to claim 1,

wherein said reception unit is capable of further receiving a comment made by the client, and

in the case in which said reception unit receives the comment, said control unit decides that the sales  
10 support server should inquire an estimated price from said dealer.

25. The sales support system according to claim 22,

wherein said estimated price database stores  
15 specifications of a vehicle for a plurality of types of vehicles, an estimated price to be automatically transmitted in selling the vehicle, and first calculator identification information of a person who has calculated the estimated price to be automatically  
20 transmitted associating them with each other,

said reception unit further receives second calculator identification information of a person who should calculate an estimated price from said client terminal,

25 said control unit decides whether or not said first calculator identification information corresponding to the estimated price to be

automatically transmitted of the specification  
information received by said reception unit and said  
second calculator identification information received  
by said reception unit are different, and

5        in the case in which said control unit decides  
that the first calculator identification information  
and the second calculator identification information  
are different, said second transmission unit sends the  
estimated price to be automatically transmitted to said  
10 dealer terminal and requests approval on transmitting  
the estimated price to be automatically transmitted to  
said client terminal.

26. A sales support method which uses a sales support  
15 server managed by a manufacturer of vehicles, a dealer  
terminal used by a dealer of vehicles, a client  
terminal, and an estimated price database in which  
specifications for vehicles and estimated prices to be  
automatically transmitted for the vehicles are stored  
20 in association with each other for a plurality of kinds  
of vehicles, the sales support method comprising:

a reception step in which said sales support  
server receives specification information specifying  
specifications for a vehicle and an estimation request  
25 from said client terminal;

a decision step of, when the estimation request is  
received in the reception step, deciding whether to



send an estimated price to be automatically transmitted stored in said estimated price database to said client terminal or to inquire an estimated price from said dealer;

5           a first transmission step of, if it is decided in said decision step to send the estimated price to be automatically transmitted stored in said estimated price database to said client terminal, reading the estimated price to be automatically transmitted from  
10 said estimated price database based upon the specification information received in said reception step and sending the estimated price to said client terminal; and

          a second transmission step of, if it is decided in  
15 said decision step to inquire the estimated price from said dealer, sending the specification information received in said reception step to said dealer terminal.

27. The sales support method according to claim 26,  
20           wherein, in said reception step, client information specifying a client is received from said client terminal,

          in said decision step, it is decided whether to send an estimated price to be automatically transmitted  
25 stored in said estimated price database to said client terminal or to inquire an estimated price from said

dealer according to the client information received in  
said reception step, and

in said second transmission step, in the case in  
which it is decided in said decision step said sales  
5 support server should inquire an estimated price from  
said dealer, the client information and the  
specification information received in said reception  
step to said dealer terminal.

10 28. The sales support method according to claim 26,  
wherein, in said reception step, a comment made by  
the client can be further received from said client  
terminal, and

in said decision step, in the case in which the  
15 comment is received in said reception step, it is  
decided that said sales support server should inquire  
an estimated price from said dealer.

29. The sales support method according to claim 26,  
20 wherein said estimated price database stores  
specifications of a vehicle for a plurality of types of  
vehicles, an estimated price to be automatically  
transmitted in selling the vehicle, and first  
calculator identification information of a person who  
25 has calculated the estimated price to be automatically  
transmitted associating them with each other,

in said reception step, second calculator identification information of a person who should calculate an estimated price is further received from said client terminal,

5 in said decision step, it is decided whether or not said first calculator identification information corresponding to the estimated price to be automatically transmitted of the specification information received in said reception step and said  
10 second calculator identification information received in said reception step are different, and

in said second transmission step, in the case in which it is decided in said decision step that the first calculator identification information and the  
15 second calculator identification information are different, the estimated price to be automatically transmitted is sent to said dealer terminal and approval on transmitting the estimated price to be automatically transmitted to said client terminal is  
20 requested.